

MINUTES FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES – SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 MEETING

09/16/2025 | 05:02 PM - 05:29 PM
Todd Center Board Room

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Joan Smith called the meeting of the Lake Michigan College Board of Trustees to order on September 16, 2025, at 5:02 pm.

PLEDEGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Smith opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Ms. Joan Smith, Ms. Debra Johnson, Ms. Vicki Burghdoff, Mr. John Grover and Ms. Mary Jo Tomasini

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The meeting minutes from the August 19, 2025 Board meetings were approved as presented with a voice vote by all trustees present.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATION FROM THE FLOOR

None

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Kubatzke began his report by welcoming and introducing several new members of the Lake Michigan College community:

- Jeff Blake – Director, Human Resources
- Robert Quigley – Faculty, Computer Information Systems

- Mark Ridgeway – Faculty, Computer Information Systems
- Jim Benak – Faculty, Computer Information Systems
- Neil Boreczky – Lecturer, Industrial Maintenance Technology
- Dr. Cornelius Fortune – Lecturer, English
- Kate Luther – Lecturer, Art
- Jay Bauer – Director, Berrien Talent Collaborative

Following the introductions, Dr. Kubatzke proudly announced that *SmartAsset* has ranked Lake Michigan College as the **#1 community college in Michigan** and **#13 nationally**. The ranking was based on key factors such as affordability, student retention, and faculty-to-student ratio. A press release highlighting this achievement will be distributed to media outlets on Wednesday, September 17, 2025.

Dr. Kubatzke also provided an update on the upcoming millage proposal and revisited the topic of the Niles campus sale. He noted that Berrien County currently lacks a dedicated vocational/technical center. In response, LMC has partnered with the local the Chamber of Commerce and Berrien RESA to establish a facility designed for high school apprenticeship programs. This collaboration allows LMC to use the space at no cost while continuing to offer classes on-site.

Additionally, on September 15, 2025, Dr. Kubatzke, along with Al Pscholka, Jennifer Shoemaker, Dr. Ken Flowers, Charmae Sanders, and Immanuel Williams, attended a Benton Harbor City Commissioners meeting. During the session, the group shared highlights of LMC's history, recent accomplishments, and details about the two millage proposals on the November ballot. The presentation was well received, and the commissioners expressed their support for the college.

NEW BUSINESS

Community College Local Strategic Value Resolution

Section 230 of PA 103 of 2023, the Fiscal Year 2025 community colleges appropriations bill contains the qualifications that must be met to receive the portion of each college's performance funding appropriation earmarked for local strategic value. The statute lists 15 separate best practices for community colleges to achieve. Institutions must satisfy 4 of 5 best practices in each of 3 different categories.

To demonstrate eligibility for this funding, Section 230 requires that each community college certifies compliance to the State Budget Office by means of a board of trustees resolution certifying that the college has met 4 of 5 best practices in each category. Further, each board resolution “shall provide specifics as to how the community college meets each best practice measure within each category.”

ACTION: It is recommended that the Lake Michigan College Board of Trustees approve the following resolution, as presented, which provides specifics as to how Lake Michigan College meets the best practice measures within each category to prove its Local Strategic Value for the region it serves.

Motion by Ms. Tomasini with support by Mr. Grover to approve the resolution, as presented, which provides specifics as to how Lake Michigan College meets the best practice measures within each category to prove its Local Strategic Value for the region it serves.

Roll Call Vote - Chair Smith asked the board secretary for a roll call vote.

Yeas: Ms. Johnson, Ms. Smith, Ms. Burghdoff, Mr. Grover, Ms. Tomasini

Nays: None

Motion Approved

POLICIES SECOND READ – APPROVAL

The Sick Leave & Earned Sick Time policy was presented to the Board of Trustees as a second read for review and/or approval.

Action: College Administration recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the policy as presented.

Motion by Ms. Burghdoff with support by Ms. Tomasini to approve the policy as presented.

Roll Call Vote - Chair Smith asked the board secretary for a roll call vote.

Yeas: Ms. Smith, Ms. Burghdoff, Mr. Grover, Ms. Tomasini, Ms. Johnson

Nays: None

Motion Approved

DEPARTMENT REPORT

Academic Affairs Department Report

Dr. Ken Flowers, Executive Vice President

Dr. Flowers updated the Board on the following Academic Affairs items:

- The Fall 2025 semester began on September 2 and is off to a strong start.
- Later this month, 25 employees will attend the MCCA Student Success Summit. During the event, Dr. John Beck will be recognized for completing the Leadership Academy. Additionally, Sara Skinner and Susan Eastman have been selected to participate in the upcoming Leadership Academy cohort for this academic year.

Student Affairs Department Report

Ms. Mel Grau, Dean of Student Life and Engagement

Ms. Grau updated the Board on the following Student Affairs items:

- Leslie Navarro will serve as a presenter at a workshop during the MCCA Student Success Summit, showcasing her expertise and contributing to the statewide conversation on student success.
- Welcome Week was a great success, thanks in part to the support of volunteers. Special thanks to Ms. Johnson for generously volunteering her time at one of the information tables.
- On Saturday, September 20, 2025, the college will formally dedicate the softball field in honor of Liz and Lloyd Miller, recognizing their lasting contributions to our college community.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Burghdoff to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Lake Michigan College Board of Trustees at 5:27 pm.



Mark Weber
Lake Michigan College Board Secretary